

How do marketing activities influence organizational reputation in higher education institutions? An impression management perspective across eight countries

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Purpose: Based on impression management theory, we ask how marketing activities build organizational reputation and we examine the mediating mechanisms of desired impressions, and the moderating impact of national culture. Specifically, and in the context of higher education institutions, we examine the influence of relational marketing and traditional advertising on organizational reputation through the mediation of desired impressions (e.g., quality of learning, career prospects and extracurricular activities) across countries.

Design/methodology/approach: This study estimates empirical models using a survey data set comprising 1,890 student responses from 10 universities in 8 countries. We use confirmatory factor analysis and measurement invariance models, and ordinary least squares with robust standard errors to test our hypotheses.

Findings: The results indicate that (1) relational marketing has direct and indirect effects on organizational reputation; (2) relational marketing has a higher influence on organizational reputation in countries with lower individualism and lower masculinity scores; (3) quality of learning mediates the relationship between traditional advertising and organizational reputation; (4) quality of learning also mediates the association between relational marketing and organizational reputation; (5) career prospects mediate the relationship between relational marketing and organizational reputation; (6) traditional advertising does not have a direct but only an indirect effect on organizational reputation; and (7) these findings are net of the effect of respondents', universities', and countries' economic characteristics.

Originality: While there are studies that focus on the impact of several constructs on organizational reputation in an international context, it is striking to observe that extant research is silent on how (via what mediating mechanisms) marketing activities work as an antecedent of organizational reputation. To address this gap, we examine marketing activities as antecedents of organizational reputation in an international, cross-country context, and specify the moderation role of cultural variables.

Research implications: Our findings contribute to the body of knowledge on the antecedents of organizational reputation, from an international marketing perspective. Our results extend the impression management by integrating constructs that have been studied independently into a cohesive framework that links marketing activities, desired impressions and organizational reputation. With our study, impression management theory provides a framework to study the impact of marketing activities on organizational reputation not only in domestic but also in international markets.

Practical implications: By asking the target market about the importance of different marketing activities, their expectations of the organization and its reputation, HE administrators can employ the model proposed in this study to assess the relevant marketing strategies that will drive desired impressions which in turn will influence reputation.

Keywords: marketing activities, desired impressions, organizational reputation, impression management theory, higher education institutions, cross-country

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Introduction

Organizational reputation¹ has become a significant concern for managers and stakeholders of organizations across the globe (Deephouse et al., 2016; Kitchen & Laurence, 2003; Newburry, 2010; Sarstedt et al., 2013) and has been considered as an asset driving performance of organizations (Money & Hillenbrand, 2006). Organizational reputation is defined as “a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects that describes the firm’s overall appeal to its key constituents when compared to other leading rivals” (Fombrun, 1996, p. 72)². Gardberg and Formbrun (2002) highlight that organizations need to manage their external presence in increasingly globalized markets by placing significant efforts in organizational reputation as a strategic asset and therefore inspecting policies and actions (Ali et al., 2015; Lange et al., 2011; Swoboda et al., 2016).

Given the importance of reputation worldwide, gaining further insights on the *antecedents* of reputation across countries is needed. The number of studies that focus on reputation in a cross-country context has been growing, and a summary of such international studies is presented in Table 1. These studies focus on the impact of constructs such as family name, legal rights and protection, media visibility, new products and direct marketing, internationalization, environmental engagement, country of origin, and national culture (e.g., Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013; Deephouse et al., 2016; Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013; Falkenreck & Wagner, 2010; Gangi et al.,

¹ We refer to organizational reputation instead of corporate reputation because of the context under study, namely higher education institutions.

² We specifically focus on two dimensions of organizational reputation: (1) reputation as being known for something and (2) reputation as a generalized favorability relative to competitors (Lange et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2005). We explain these dimensions in the conceptual framework and hypotheses section.

2020; Kitchen & Laurence, 2003; Soleimani et al., 2014; Swoboda & Batton, 2019). What we do not clearly know from extant literature is the role of marketing activities for building reputation in an international context. Falkenreck and Wagner (2010), Becker-Olsen et al. (2011) and Radomir and Alan (2018) have helped us understand the positive influence of direct marketing, marketing communications of corporate social responsibility, and relationship investment for building reputation internationally. Other studies -at the domestic level- have uncovered the significant influence of visual identity, organizational communication, rankings, social responsibility, employee engagement, and trustworthiness for building reputation within a country (e.g., Alessandri et al., 2006; Almeida & Coelho, 2019; Bastedo & Bowman, 2010; Park, 2019; Rashid & Mustafa, 2021; van der Merwe & Puth, 2014; Walsh & Beatty, 2007; Walsh et al., 2009). However, we still need to know how (via what mediating mechanisms) different marketing activities work simultaneously for building reputation in an international, cross-country context.

To address this gap, we ask how marketing activities build organizational reputation across 4 geographical regions (North America, South America, Western Europe, Central Europe). We examine the marketing antecedents of organizational reputation across 8 countries characterized by varying levels of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Canada, France, Sweden, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Peru). These countries represent different degrees of economic and social development, they have a different cultural background and educational history with different higher education systems. For instance, Canada, France and Sweden are representative contexts of developed countries; while, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania are representative contexts of post-transition economies. Peru is a representative context of developing economies. With this international, cross-country study, we provide a better understanding of the nuances of the influence of organizations' marketing actions on their reputation across countries.

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3 More specifically, while the literature has established the importance of country context and
4 culture on reputation (e.g., Bartikowski et al., 2011; Deephouse et al., 2016; Swoboda and
5 colleagues), very few studies have examined the *moderating effect of cultural values on the*
6 *relationship between antecedent variables and organizational reputation*. Ruiz and Garcia (2019)
7 focused on one cultural value (uncertainty avoidance) and demonstrated that it has a moderation
8 effect on two antecedents – workplace (being perceived as a good employer) and leadership. Other
9 studies, while not directly measuring and hypothesizing cultural variables as moderators, have
10 found that antecedents of reputation vary across countries. For instance, Osakwe et al. (2020) found
11 that the relationship between service offering appeal and corporate reputation is stronger in Ghana
12 than in Kenya and South Africa; while Ruiz et al. (2016) found differences in how some
13 antecedents of reputation work between the UK and Spain. Pertaining specifically to marketing
14 activities as an antecedent to reputation (which is the focus of our study), Falkenreck and Wagner
15 (2010) examined the role of direct marketing and the moderation of cultural values in a B2B
16 context. Our study adds to the existing literature by theoretically specifying and empirically testing
17 the *moderation effect of various cultural value dimensions on the relationship between several*
18 *marketing activities (not previously examined in the literature) and reputation in a high-credence*
19 *B2C context*.

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22 To build our framework, we employ impression management theory (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Fisk
23 & Grove, 1996; Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Shukla, 2012). While the business literature using
24 impression management theory has been interested in how and why employees impress colleagues
25 and superiors (e.g., see Bolino et al., 2016 for a literature review), we use this theory to study
26 reputation. Different from research on impression management that has centered on the antecedents
27 of actor behavior (Carter, 2006; Morrison & Bies, 1991; Vilela et al., 2007), we focus on the
28 consequences of actor behavior (Shukla, 2012). Specifically, we expand impression management
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2 theory by integrating actor behavior, desired impressions and audience behavior into one model.
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4 Impression management theory argues that the audience gives a favorable response to an actor's
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6 behavior when the actor provides impressions desired by the audience (Davies et al., 2010;
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8 Deephouse et al., 2016; Fisk & Grove, 1996; Love & Kraatz, 2009; Westphal & Graebner, 2010). In
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10 this sense, central to our study is the role of desired impressions as a mediating variable that helps
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12 explain how marketing activities impact reputation across countries.
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16 Our context of study is the higher education (HE) sector. A service industry, such as HE, is
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18 characterized by higher risk and commitment (Walsh & Beatty, 2007). In services, reputation is
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20 important as there is less physical evidence to evaluate quality (Bartikowski et al., 2011; Walsh &
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22 Beatty, 2007; Walsh et al., 2009), and HE institutions may be more likely to feel the effects of
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24 reputation loss (Bartikowski et al., 2011; Fombrun, 1996). The demand for HE worldwide is
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26 estimated to grow to more than 262 million students by 2025 (Bjarnason et al., 2009). Marketing to
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28 recruit and retain students has become more important (Angulo-Ruiz et al., 2016; Angulo,
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30 Pergelova, & Rialp, 2010; Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016; Marginson & van der Wende, 2007). Given
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32 the growing emphasis on marketing in HE, research has followed through (e.g., Athiyaman, 1997;
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34 Foroudi et al., 2017; Herrero-Crespo et al., 2016; Meidan, 1977; Plewa et al., 2016).
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39 This study has relevant managerial implications. Senior and middle management need to
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41 approach the process of building reputation across countries strategically. This research provides an
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43 impression management framework for decision makers that can be applicable in the context of HE
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45 institutions. This framework highlights how marketing activities drive organizational reputation
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47 across international markets from an audience perspective. By asking the target market about the
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49 importance of different marketing activities, their expectations of the organization and its
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51 reputation, HE administrators can employ the model proposed in this study to assess the relevant
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53 marketing strategies that will drive desired impressions which in turn will influence reputation.
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3 This paper is structured as follows. First, a literature review of reputation in an international
4 context is presented. Then, the context of this study is described, and a conceptual framework and
5 hypotheses are developed. Next, the methodology is presented, including the sample, confirmatory
6 factor analysis, measurement invariance, operationalization of variables and the analytical methods.
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8 Finally, results, discussion, and future research directions are presented.
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17 **Literature review on reputation in an international context**

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19 Table 1 provides a summary of extant empirical research on organizational reputation in an
20 international, cross-country context. These studies typically use a customer-based reputation (Walsh
21 & Beatty, 2007; Walsh et al. 2009) or a stakeholder-based reputation using the data collected by the
22 Reputation Institute (Ponzi et al., 2011). International studies on organizational reputation focus
23 either on its antecedents or outcomes across a varied number of countries (from 2 to 43 countries).
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25 On the antecedents of organizational reputation across countries, for example, Kitchen and
26 Laurence (2003) provide an industry perspective and highlight that the customer is central for
27 understanding reputation. Falkenreck and Wagner (2010) examine the impact of new products,
28 direct marketing and word of mouth on organizational reputation. Deephouse and Jaskiewicz (2013)
29 study the influence of family business name on reputation. Delgado-Márquez et al. (2013) show the
30 significant influence of the internationalization of universities on reputation. Soleimani et al. (2014)
31 investigate whether differences in the legal rights and protections of shareholders, creditors, and
32 workers across countries affect organizational reputation in 32 countries. Ali et al. (2015), in a
33 meta-analysis, study the influence of media visibility and other antecedents on reputation. Vidaver-
34 Cohen et al. (2015) study the impact of country of origin on different dimensions of organizational
35 reputation. Deephouse et al. (2016) examine the impact of institutional development and national
36 culture on organizational reputation. Ruiz et al. (2016), Ruiz and Garcia (2019) and Osakwe et al.
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3 (2020) examine the influence of products and services, and employer branding -among other
4 antecedents- on bank reputation. Swoboda and Hirschmann (2017) and Swoboda and Batton (2019)
5 study the influence of different dimensions of national culture on reputation. Gangi et al. (2020)
6 examine the role of environmental engagement and green product innovation on reputation.
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11 International, cross-country studies on the outcomes of organizational reputation have also been
12 developed. Typical outcomes of reputation include customer loyalty and trust (Ali et al. 2015;
13 Bartikowski et al. 2011; Jin et al. 2008; Sarstedt et al. 2013; Swoboda et al. 2016, 2017; Swoboda &
14 Batton, 2020; Swoboda & Hirschmann 2017), support and citizenship behavior (Newburry 2010;
15 Sarstedt et al. 2013), and financial performance (Ali et al. 2015).
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23 Research on organizational reputation in an international, cross-country context is growing and
24 has advanced the understanding of culture on reputation. However, there are still opportunities to
25 develop our knowledge, especially on the antecedents of reputation across countries. A meta-
26 analysis suggests that research is limited on the role of marketing activities as an antecedent of
27 organizational reputation (Ali et al., 2015). While few studies have provided some light on the
28 influence of marketing activities on reputation across countries (Ali et al., 2015; Becker-Olsen et
29 al., 2011; Falkenreck & Wagner, 2010; Radomir & Alan, 2018; Ruiz et al., 2016), there is a dearth
30 of research on what role traditional advertising and relational marketing play for building
31 reputation. We focus on relational marketing and traditional advertising because these activities
32 demand the largest share of marketing expenditures (Ambler, 2000) and are relevant input flows in
33 the marketing process (Keller & Lehmann, 2003; Rust et al., 2004), especially in an international
34 context (Samiee et al., 2015; Sichtmann & von Selasinsky, 2010). In particular, we need to know
35 how marketing activities -traditional advertising and relational marketing- build organizational
36 reputation across countries, and which desired impressions organizations need to focus in their
37 marketing activities to build reputation across countries.
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3 Accordingly, our study is grounded on impression management theory (Cocker et al., 2018; Fisk
4 & Grove, 1996; O’Leary & Murphy, 2019; Pounders et al., 2016; Shukla, 2012; Vilela et al., 2007)
5 and provides insights on how impression management can be used in future theoretical and
6 empirical developments in marketing and international business to better understand reputation.
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8 Impression management theory is an important perspective to understand the relationship between
9 marketing activities and organizational reputation. Fisk and Grove (1996) characterize marketing as
10 impression management and argue that “a significant part of the marketing enterprise entails
11 activities that parallel those commonly found in impression management (e.g., efforts to convey a
12 particular image through actions, symbols or words in order to evoke a desired response)” (p. 7).
13
14 Fisk and Grove (1996) also argue that characterizing marketing as impression management “has the
15 potential to enhance one’s appreciation of the dynamics involved in influencing consumer demand
16 and to foster new insights regarding the nature of marketing” and “may have the pragmatic
17 consequence of contributing to more effective marketing actions” (p. 8). Impression management
18 has been used in marketing to understand value perceptions within and between western developed
19 and eastern emerging markets (Shukla, 2012), how young people navigate different audiences and
20 contexts of their lives (Cocker et al., 2018), how anonymity and self-presentations interact (O’Leary
21 & Murphy, 2019), the relationship between selfies and self-esteem (Pounders et al., 2016), and sales
22 performance appraisal (Vilela et al., 2007). Grounding our work on impression management, we
23 aim to understand how marketing activities build organizational reputation through the mediation of
24 desired impressions, in an international context.
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53 **Context of study** 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

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3 As indicated earlier, this study focuses on a high-credence service sector (de Matos & Rossi, 2008;
4 Stein & Ramaseshan, 2015) – namely, the HE sector (Athiyaman, 1997; Meidan, 1977). The
5 education sector is a particularly interesting context to study, as it is experiencing significant growth
6 (Durvasula et al., 2011). For instance, the demand for HE worldwide has been projected to expand
7 from 97 million students in 2000 to over 262 million students by 2025 (Bjarnason et al., 2009). Not
8 only is the education sector booming in growth, but it is also “swept up in global marketization”
9 (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007, p. 7). As the HE market has become extremely competitive
10 domestically and internationally (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013), many HE institutions engage in
11 marketing and design marketing activities with the aim of increasing student recruitment and
12 retention (Angulo-Ruiz, et al 2016; Angulo et al., 2010; Dennis et al., 2016; Hemsley-Brown &
13 Oplatka, 2006). Given the growing emphasis on marketing in HE, it is surprising that studies in HE
14 marketing have not paid critical attention to examining the marketing antecedents of organizational
15 reputation (e.g., Alessandri et al., 2006; Bastedo & Bowman, 2010; Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013;
16 Foroudi et al., 2017; Herrero-Crespo et al., 2016; Plewa et al., 2016).

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35 HE is characterized by higher risk and commitment given the importance of the decision about
36 which HE institution to attend for the prospect students’ future careers. Reputation becomes
37 particularly important in services where there is little physical evidence to evaluate quality and
38 where prospects cannot evaluate elements of the service at all sometimes (Bromley, 2001; Hardaker
39 & Fill, 2005; Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016; Plewa et al., 2016; Ruiz et al., 2016). Due to their
40 intangibility, and the fact that the quality of services is more difficult to evaluate, HE institutions
41 may be more likely to feel the effects of reputation loss than other types of organizations
42 (Bartikowski et al., 2011; Fombrun, 1996; Kim & Choi, 2003). In this sense, we echo Rindova et al.
43 (2005) and use business schools as our empirical context to help materialize our contributions to
44 impression management theory.
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Conceptual framework and hypotheses

The influence of marketing activities on organizational reputation

We build our framework using impression management theory because “impression management is woven intimately into the fabric of the marketing enterprise” (Fisk & Grove, 1996, p. 8). Goffman (1959) sets out the sociological bases of impression management and is “concerned only with the participant’s dramaturgical problems of presenting the activity before others” (p. 15). Gardner and Martinko (1988) go further and provide a much more elaborated version of impression management theory suggesting that environmental, situational, actor and audience factors influence the impression management process. Building on Goffman (1959), Gardner and Martinko (1988) argue that “actors select those behaviors which they expect will make the most desirable impression. The success of an actor’s presentation is influenced by the degree to which the actor’s performance is perceived as being congruent with audience’s definition of the situation. When congruence is high, the actor is more likely to create the desired impression and elicit a favorable response. Conversely, when the audience perceives the actor’s presentation to be inappropriate, negative impressions and undesirable audience reactions are more probable” (p. 324). Goffman (1959) refers to performance as the activity or actions of a given actor. In impression management theory, the actor is “knowledgeable, conscious and aware of the audience” (O’Leary & Murphy, 2019, p. 87), which is the case of higher education institutions (e.g., universities).

Our framework, in Figure 1, takes into consideration three aspects of the impression management process: actor’s behavior, desired impressions and audience behavior. Actor’s behavior includes the various activities or actions that organizations can use to generate different impressions. In particular, we refer to actor’s *desired* behavior, or the behavior that is desired by the audience. We focus on organizations’ activities that are deemed important for the audience and

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3 assume that if organizations employ activities deemed important by the audience there will be a
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5 higher probability that the audience will provide a favorable response.
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9 Audience behavior indicates the response the audience will give to the actor's performance, in
10 other words, the audience may give a favorable or unfavorable response based on the actor's
11 behavior. In our framework, audience behavior refers to organizational reputation. Organizational
12 reputation is defined as "a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future
13 prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to its key constituents when compared to other
14 leading rivals" (Fombrun, 1996, p. 72). We focus on two different but related conceptualizations of
15 reputation in the literature: (1) reputation as *being known for something* (Lange et al., 2011) - or
16 more specifically in the HE context, being known for producing quality graduates (Rindova et al.,
17 2005); and (2) reputation as a *generalized favorability* where reputation consists of an overall,
18 generalized assessment of the organization's favorability relative to competitors (Lange et al., 2011;
19 Rindova et al., 2005). Fischer and Reuber (2007) refer to this second aspect of reputation as "an
20 overall, or aggregate, assessment by groups of stakeholders that builds on and transcends particular
21 aspects of the organization's past or future" (p. 56), resulting in favorability assessments that "are
22 compared with assessments of similar organizations" (p. 57).
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41 Given that the marketing function in the organization is responsible for communicating with
42 diverse audiences which in turn may contribute to building reputation for the organization (e.g.,
43 Alessandri et al., 2006; Foroudi et al., 2017; Herrero-Crespo et al., 2016; Plewa et al., 2016), we
44 study marketing activities as a part of the actor's behavior. Specifically, we focus on traditional
45 advertising and relational marketing³. Traditional advertising builds brand awareness and brand
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55 ³ Previous research has studied the role of social media on reputation (Dijkmans et al. 2016; Ji et al., 2017; Li, 2016).
56 However, because research in the context of higher education has not found significant effects of social media and
57 websites on reputation (Foroudi et al., 2017), in this study we only focus on traditional advertising and relational
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3 associations (Chapleo, 2011; Keller, 1993) and can “have an effect on expectation formation
4 through information” (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993: p. 322) and therefore may affect the reputation
5 perception in the minds of future prospects. Previous research has shown that organizational
6 communication affects reputation in a sample of workers in the biggest dairy cooperative in the
7 Iberian Peninsula (Almeida & Coelho, 2019). In the HE sector, traditional advertising activities
8 could help prospects evaluate the ranking of a university as well as its quality (Bastedo & Bowman,
9 2010); however, previous research is not clear on the influence of marketing communication on
10 reputation. While Alessandri et al. (2006) find an association between visual identity and reputation,
11 Foroudi et al. (2017) did not show a strong effect of advertising on planned brand identity and
12 reputation. Relational marketing, on the other hand, builds closer ties with prospects and
13 consequently prospects may be emotionally appealed to choose an organization. In the HE context,
14 relationship marketing can help manage risks, such as addressing prospects’ information needs,
15 quality issues and university expectations (Arnett et al., 2003; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). In
16 this sense, we expect that traditional advertising and relational marketing will build organizational
17 reputation as a generalized favorability or reputation as being known for quality. Thus,
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37 *H1a: Traditional advertising will influence organizational reputation as a generalized*
38 *favorability or as being known for quality.*
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41 *H1b: Relational marketing will influence organizational reputation as a generalized*
42 *favorability or as being known for quality.*
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49 **The mediation of quality of learning and career prospects**

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52 marketing. We surmise that the reason why social media may not have an effect on reputation in the context of HE is
53 because university choice is a very high-involvement decision, and it is heavily influenced by tradition and long-term
54 positioning. Traditional advertising and relational marketing are marketing activities that are more conducive to
55 building reputation in such a context. Thus, while social media is actively used by consumers when interacting with the
56 brands they use in their everyday lives, it is likely not actively used for building reputation in the context of HE, even
57 though it serves as an important communication vehicle.
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3 As part of our framework in Figure 1, desired impressions refer to the idea that the audiences give a
4 favorable response to organizations that appear to possess desirable character traits (Davies et al.,
5 2010; Fisk & Grove, 1996; Hallier Willi et al., 2014), and that the audiences look for such traits,
6 regardless of whether organizations actually “possess” them (Love & Kraatz, 2009). Current
7 research has established that organizational character is a critical explanation of reputation (Love &
8 Kraatz, 2009). It is known that audiences grant reputation in response to various “signals” that
9 organizations send, but it is less clear which of the many signals (Spence, 1973; Swoboda et al.,
10 2016) that an organization sends are the most likely to be received by its audience and therefore to
11 enhance (or damage) its existing reputation.
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23 The literature has suggested that audiences are especially concerned with organizations’
24 suitability as exchange partners and consequently tend to esteem organizations that appear to
25 possess character traits such as trustworthiness and reliability (Fombrun, 1996; van der Merwe &
26 Puth, 2014). In the HE context, desired organizational attributes such as quality of learning
27 (Chapman & Pyvis, 2006; Herrero-Crespo et al., 2016; Meidan, 1977; Wiese et al., 2010) and career
28 prospects (Gray et al., 2003; Mai, 2005; Meidan, 1977; Wiese et al., 2010) have been considered
29 relevant influencers on the decision to select a university. Baharun, Awang and Padlee (2010) found
30 that the quality of education is the most important factor of HE institutions choice.
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41 Additionally, according to Girasek et al. (2011) first-year university students consider high
42 income as one of the most important factors in the decision of studying at a university. In this sense,
43 a student’s career is also an important motivating factor for university students (Ivy, 2010).
44 Working-class students are directly concerned with the employment value of their university
45 education (Lehman, 2009). Overall, research suggests that students expect from HE institutions a
46 potential to increase their future work opportunities and long-term benefits as well as to provide
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3 high quality of education and learning experience (Brinkworth et al., 2009; Jimenez & Salas-
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5 Velasco, 2000; Rochat & Demeulemeester, 2001; Montmarquette et al., 2002).
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7 One important way in which HE institutions signal their trustworthiness and reliability is with
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9 their marketing activities designed to enhance the universities' desirable character traits for quality
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11 of learning and career prospects. For instance, universities can use quality of learning and career
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13 prospects in their traditional communications (print, radio, billboards or TV ads) or emphasize those
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15 desired impressions when meeting with prospects through relationship marketing (open houses,
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17 career days, conversations with alumni, information sessions). On the one hand, universities can
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19 include -in their traditional advertising or relational marketing activities- quality of learning traits
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21 such as class size, quality of teachers, learning environment or access to professors and advisors. On
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23 the other hand, universities can embed career prospects traits related to desired program of study,
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25 diversified choice of majors or future professional prospects in their advertisements or when
26
27 building relations with prospects students. Research has indicated that stakeholders admire and find
28
29 attractive those organizations that align with what stakeholders think about an organization in
30
31 relation to their expectations (Deephouse et al., 2016). Consequently, we hypothesize:
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36

37 *H2a: Quality of learning will mediate the relationship between traditional advertising and*
38
39 *organizational reputation as a generalized favorability or as being known for quality.*
40

41 *H2b: Quality of learning will mediate the association between relational marketing and*
42
43 *organizational reputation as a generalized favorability or as being known for quality.*
44

45 *H3a: Career prospects will mediate the relationship between traditional advertising and*
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47 *organizational reputation as a generalized favorability or as being known for quality.*
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49 *H3b: Career prospects will mediate the relationship between relational marketing and*
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51 *organizational reputation as a generalized favorability or as being known for quality.*
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The mediation of extracurricular activities

Another important aspect of how organizations achieve reputation is by conforming to practices that are deemed appropriate and culturally desirable (Love & Kraatz, 2009). For instance, Staw and Epstein (2000) provide an example of the “symbolic conformity mechanism” with their findings that firms enhance their reputations by adopting various popular management practices (e.g., employee empowerment). The argument is that the effect occurred because these practices embodied the normative values and cultural beliefs of the audiences who ascribed the reputations. Such a symbolic conformity view assumes that organizations and their stakeholders are co-participants in larger cultural systems (Love & Kraatz, 2009). This view from the management literature echoes developments in the marketing literature focused on customer participation and value co-creation (e.g., Christodoulides et al., 2012; Fuchs et al., 2010). Research has suggested that consumers respond more favorably to participative, dialogue-based communication between companies and consumers and appreciate the opportunity to have more control over the communications process (Tucker, 2014; Schumann et al., 2014; Orazi et al., 2016), as well as participate in building the meaning of the brand. The brand communities’ literature has also provided examples of consumers co-shaping the brand (meaning) and its development (e.g., Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Such shifts position the organization’s ability to interact with consumers and build a sense of belonging and shared purpose as desirable traits. The growing interest in the marketing literature in topics related to social interaction and belonging suggests that such practices are considered important.

In the HE context, students’ participation in extracurricular activities are associated with social interaction and belonging (Angulo et al., 2010). Tinto (1975) recognizes the critical role of student integration in the academic life; in effect, extracurricular activities will allow prospect students to have future integration and reduce the likelihood of student attrition. Extracurricular activities such

1
2
3 as participation in student clubs, sport activities, and social networking events are considered as
4
5 strong impactful factors in some cultures (Chebeň & Chebeň, 2002). For instance, a study in Poland
6
7 found that clubs, sport activities, and social networking events are among the most important factors
8
9 in university choice (Sojkin et al., 2011).

10
11 Marketing activities of HE institutions can embed desired impressions related to extracurricular
12
13 activities in their marketing communications and relationship marketing activities. Universities can
14
15 echo participation in extracurricular clubs and activities, student social networking events or sports
16
17 in their radio, billboards, TV or print ads. Universities can also talk about those extracurricular
18
19 aspects during open houses, career expo days, information sessions on campus or in face-to-face
20
21 interaction between alumni and prospects students. Research has indicated that stakeholders admire
22
23 and find attractive those organizations that appear to have desirable character traits (Davies et al.,
24
25 2010). Therefore, by embedding extracurricular desired attributes in their marketing activities,
26
27 universities can impact reputation. Thus, we hypothesize:

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32 *H4a: Extracurricular activities will mediate the relationship between traditional advertising*
33
34 *and organizational reputation as a generalized favorability or as being known for quality.*

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36
37 *H4b: Extracurricular activities will mediate the association between relational marketing and*
38
39 *organizational reputation as a generalized favorability or as being known for quality.*
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42 43 44 **Differences among cultures: Individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance**

45
46 In addition to the direct and mediated effects of traditional advertising and relational marketing on
47
48 reputation, we hypothesize a moderating role of culture. Specifically, based on previous research in
49
50 marketing, we focus on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions of individualism / collectivism,
51
52 masculinity / femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. We omit Hofstede's power distance dimension
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54 since, as demonstrated by Steenkamp and Geyskens (2012, p. 260), power distance and
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1
2 individualism are highly correlated, and including both dimensions in the same model would lead to
3
4 unstable parameter estimates. Individualism has been consistently shown to have the largest size
5
6 effects in cross-cultural studies (e.g., Chui & Kwok, 2008; Möller & Eisend, 2010); hence, we
7
8 include individualism instead of power distance.
9
10

11 The cultural dimension of individualism / collectivism describes the relationships between an
12
13 individual and the collectivity in which they live. In individualistic societies people tend to look
14
15 after themselves and their immediate family members, while in collectivistic societies people
16
17 belong to “in-groups” and look after one another in those groups (Hofstede, 2001). The way people
18
19 acquire information varies with the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism (de Mooij &
20
21 Hofstede, 2010). In collectivistic societies, interpersonal relationships and communication are
22
23 relatively more important, while in individualistic cultures people tend to acquire information
24
25 independently via different media and make decisions based on the process of actively gathering
26
27 information, motivated by personal preferences (Pergelova & Angulo-Ruiz, 2017). Therefore, we
28
29 expect that traditional advertising will be relatively more important in building organizational
30
31 reputation in high individualism countries, while relational marketing will be relatively more
32
33 important in low individualism countries.
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39 We expect a similar effect for the masculinity cultural dimension. Masculine societies place
40
41 more importance on values such as success, achievement, and competitiveness, while feminine
42
43 societies are relatively more concerned with quality of life, solidarity, and caring for others
44
45 (Hofstede, 2001). High masculinity has also been linked to high materialism and the consumption
46
47 of more products. Since advertising emphasizes consumption and achievement, it is likely to have a
48
49 stronger effect on reputation in masculine cultures. Conversely, because feminine societies value
50
51 modesty and relationship quality, they may be more skeptical towards advertising and more prone
52
53 to trust relational marketing activities (Möller & Eisend, 2010).
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1
2
3 Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which people in a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or
4 uncertain situations (Hofstede, 2001). In such societies, people prefer structures and rules that
5 reduce the uncertainties. Traditional advertising may be perceived as more useful in those cultures
6 because it provides information in a structured way about products and services. As such,
7 advertising reduces uncertainty related to consumption decisions (Möller & Eisend, 2010), and can
8 boost the reputation perceptions of an organization. Relationships, on the other hand, may not
9 address the uncertainty completely, because relationships take time to construct (Steenkamp &
10 Geyskens, 2012). Building on the preceding discussion, we propose the following hypotheses:

11
12
13 *H5: The influence of traditional advertising and relational marketing on organizational reputation*
14 *varies depending on the cultural characteristics of a country, such that:*

15
16
17 *H5a: In countries with higher individualism and masculinity, traditional advertising will have a*
18 *higher influence on organizational reputation.*

19
20
21 *H5b: In countries with lower individualism and masculinity, relational marketing will have a*
22 *higher influence on organizational reputation.*

23
24
25 *H5c: In countries with higher uncertainty avoidance, traditional advertising will have a higher*
26 *influence on organizational reputation.*

27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 **Methodology**

43 44 **Sample**

45
46 The unit of analysis of this research comprises first and second-year university students enrolled in
47 a business-related program. Students in the first two years of university have fresher memories of
48 the process they experienced when choosing a university and evaluating university reputation, and
49 this is in line with previous research (e.g., Menon, 1998, 2004; Menon et al., 2007). Roberts and
50 Dowling (2002) suggest that research on reputation should focus on users as probably the most
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1
2 important stakeholder group, because they create revenue streams (see also, Kitchen & Lauren,
3 2003; Walsh et al., 2009).
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5

6
7 The analysis is based on data from ten universities (see Table 2), all these universities engage in
8 relational marketing and traditional advertising to attract national and international students. The
9 programs students were enrolled in are comparable across these HE institutions and are focused on
10 management and commerce. The selection of universities and students for this study is non-
11 probabilistic. Based on the location of this paper's authors (Canada, Peru and Europe), we
12 conveniently selected universities. One of the authors had the opportunity to teach at several
13 universities in Europe and took the opportunity to collect questionnaires from students. The
14 questionnaire was approved by the Research Ethics Board and thus ethical procedures were
15 followed when collecting data. We contacted the dean of the School of Business and also requested
16 the permission from professors teaching a particular section. After permission was granted, students
17 were asked to complete the questionnaire, following all ethical procedures. Students were informed
18 that their participation is voluntary and anonymous, and that they can choose to answer only those
19 questions they are comfortable with and can withdraw from the study at any point.
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37 The questionnaire was built using items from previous studies and from our own past studies
38 (see operationalization of variables section). The questionnaire was written in English and then
39 translated to the language of the location of the university. For instance, in the case of Peru, the
40 questionnaire was translated into Spanish and then back translated in English to follow the standard
41 procedures. In the case of the Swedish university in our sample, the questionnaire was applied in
42 English. We collected questionnaires using hard copies and then manually input responses into an
43 excel file, which was later converted into SPSS and Stata files for further data processing. For the
44 purposes of this research, a data set comprising 1,890 observations from 10 universities in 8
45 countries is used.
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[Insert Table 2 about here]

Measurement model: Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to verify if the data fit the expected structure of Figure 1, how well the items represent the constructs, and if the theoretical measurement model is valid. Supplementary file 1 details the results of CFA including factor loadings, average variance extracted, construct reliability as well as mean and standard deviations of all items. Results support overall fit, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Measurement invariance: Comparability of variables across countries

This study assesses measurement invariance following the procedures suggested by Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), Byrne (2004) and Ender (2013). Considering that the constructs show at least partial metric, scalar and error invariance, this study can assess the impact of traditional advertising and relational marketing on organizational reputation through the mediating effects of quality of learning, career prospects and extracurricular activities. Details are presented in supplementary file 2.

Operationalization of variables

Organizational reputation. The main dependent variable of this study is organizational reputation. As indicated earlier, we conceptualize organizational reputation including two dimensions. We follow the two reputation dimensions suggested by Lange et al. (2011). The first reputation dimension we use is reputation as being known for quality. Particularly, we measure this dimension employing two items: “I chose this university because of the quality of programs” and “I chose this university because of this university’s reputation/ranking” (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010;

1
2
3 Rindova et al., 2005). Respondents rated the level of agreement to these items (from 1 “strongly
4 disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”). After running measurement invariance, to measure this dimension,
5 we use the latent measurement result from the partial error invariance model. The Cronbach’s alpha
6
7 for this construct is 0.704.
8
9

10
11 The second dimension we use is reputation as a generalized favorability. We measure the
12 second dimension of reputation by evaluating each university under study against each of the five
13 main competitors in their geographical markets (1: much worse to 5: much better) (Fischer &
14 Reuber, 2007). We used the total sum of evaluations as the score for generalized favorability. The
15 scores range from 5 to 25.
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23 ***Quality of learning.*** For desired organizational attributes, we use different latent needs that
24 students expect when choosing a university in general. Respondents were asked the following
25 question: rate how important the following factors were to you in evaluating a university/college to
26 attend? Because our sample respondents are first and second year students, we were asking students
27 to remember what was important to them when they were evaluating a university. We measure
28 quality of learning with the importance given to each of the following four items on a scale from 1
29 “not important” to 5 “very important”: quality of teachers, learning environment, access to
30 professors and advisors (e.g., Chapman & Pyvis, 2006; Meidan, 1977; Wiese et al., 2010). The
31 Cronbach’s alpha for this construct is 0.694. For testing hypotheses, we use the latent measurement
32 result from the partial error invariance model as the measure of quality of learning.
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46 ***Career prospects.*** We use the same survey question as for quality of learning. Specifically, we
47 measure career prospects with the importance given to each of these three items: desired program of
48 study, diversified choice of majors and future career prospects (e.g., Gray et al., 2003; Mai, 2005;
49 Meidan, 1977; Wiese et al., 2010). The Cronbach’s coefficient for this construct is 0.667. to
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1
2
3 measure career prospects, we use the latent measurement result from the partial error invariance
4
5 model.

6
7 ***Extracurricular activities.*** Using the same survey question employed for quality of learning, we
8
9 measure the importance given to three items: extracurricular clubs and activities, student social
10
11 networking events, and sports (Angulo et al., 2010; Tinto, 1975). Cronbach's alpha for this
12
13 construct is 0.707. We employ the latent measurement result from the partial error invariance model
14
15 to measure extracurricular activities.

16
17
18 ***Traditional advertising.*** For marketing activities, we use students' perception of the importance
19
20 of marketing methods in their decision to attend a university. Respondents were asked the following
21
22 question: How important were each of the following communication methods in your decision to
23
24 attend a university? We measure traditional advertising using the importance assigned to each of the
25
26 following four marketing methods on a scale from 1 "not important" to 5 "very important": radio
27
28 ads, billboards, TV ads, and print ads (Chapleo, 2011). Cronbach's alpha of traditional advertising
29
30 is 0.857. To measure traditional advertising, we use the latent values from the partial measurement
31
32 invariance model for this construct.

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37 ***Relational marketing.*** We use the same survey question as the one used for traditional
38
39 advertising. In particular, we measure relational marketing using the importance given to the
40
41 following recruitment methods: open house, career expo day, information session on campus, and
42
43 face-to-face interaction with alumni (Arnett et al., 2003; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).
44
45 Cronbach's alpha of relational marketing is 0.765. In regression models, we employ the latent
46
47 measure for this construct after running the partial error invariance model.

48
49
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51 ***Individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance.*** Cultural differences are important to
52
53 explain the impact of marketing on reputation in an international context (e.g., Falkenreck &
54
55 Wager, 2010). We measure each country's level of individualism, masculinity and uncertainty
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1
2
3 avoidance using Hofstede's scores (de Mooij, 2015, 2017). As indicated in our hypotheses section,
4
5 we do not include Hofstede's power distance dimension because Steenkamp and Geyskens (2012, p.
6
7 260) demonstrated that power distance and individualism are highly correlated. In fact, in our own
8
9 data set the correlation between power distance and masculinity is high ($r = 0.6091$, $p < 0.001$).

10
11 **Control variables.** In order to obtain the net effects of marketing activities on desired
12
13 organizational attributes and organizational reputation across countries, we control for respondent's
14
15 gender (1 = female, 0=male) and parents' education and university size (total number of students).
16
17 Additionally, we control for country's percentage of education expenditures over gross domestic
18
19 product, and dummies of universities for other unexplained factors.
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21

22
23 Table 3 presents details on the operationalization of variables.
24

25
26 [Insert Table 3 about here]
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29

30 **Statistical method**

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32 Because data becomes comparable after running measurement invariance models, we pool all data
33
34 and employ ordinary least squares with robust standard errors. As a result of the measurement
35
36 invariance estimations, in the regression models we use the factor scores for the latent variables of
37
38 partial error invariance models, based on the model results for each construct (Steenkamp &
39
40 Baumgartner, 1998). Given that this study includes three mediating variables and two dependent
41
42 variables, this research specifies seven analytical models. Models 1, 2 and 3 include the effect of
43
44 traditional advertising, relational marketing and control variables on quality of learning, career
45
46 prospects and extracurricular activities, correspondingly. Models 4 and 5 are the full models and
47
48 include the direct effect of traditional advertising, relational marketing, control variables and
49
50 mediating variables on reputation as a generalized favorability and reputation as being known for
51
52 quality, respectively. We follow the procedures suggested by Hayes (2013, p. 106, 112) to test for
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2
3 mediation. In particular, in this study we estimate bootstrap bias corrected confidence intervals for
4
5 the indirect effects using 10,000 random samples. Models 6 and 7 include the moderating effect of
6
7 national culture on the relationship between marketing activities and reputation.
8
9

11 Findings

12
13
14 Table 4 includes descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. Reputation as a generalized
15
16 favorability is positively correlated with quality of learning (0.128, $p < 0.000$), parents' education
17
18 (0.06, $p < 0.012$), size (0.171, $p < 0.000$) and individualism (0.181, $p < 0.000$). Whereas, reputation as
19
20 being known for quality is positively correlated with quality of learning (0.134, $p < 0.000$), career
21
22 prospects (0.063, $p < 0.009$), extracurricular activities (0.048, $p < 0.045$), relational marketing (0.165,
23
24 $p < 0.000$), size (0.246, $p < 0.000$), individualism (0.07, $p < 0.004$), masculinity (-0.107, $p < 0.000$),
25
26 uncertainty avoidance (0.127, $p < 0.000$), and education expenditures (0.046, $p < 0.056$). Additionally,
27
28 quality of learning and extracurricular activities are positively and significantly correlated with
29
30 traditional advertising and relational marketing. Correlations among independent variables are less
31
32 than 0.50 which indicates no problems with multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010).
33
34
35

36
37 [Insert Table 4 about here]
38

39 **Testing H1a and H1b: direct effects of traditional advertising and relational marketing on** 40 41 **organizational reputation**

42
43
44 Table 5 presents the empirical findings. In models 4 and 5 we can observe the standardized direct
45
46 effects of traditional advertising and relational marketing on reputation. Specifically, traditional
47
48 advertising has no significant effect on reputation as a generalized favorability (0.006, $p > 0.10$) nor
49
50 on reputation as being known for quality (-0.022, $p > 0.10$). In additional (unreported) models where
51
52 no mediators are included or when relational marketing is not included, traditional advertising is
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1
2
3 also insignificant. These results do not support H1a that traditional advertising will influence either
4
5 organizational reputation as a generalized favorability or as being known for quality.
6

7 In model 4, relational marketing has no significant effect on reputation as a generalized
8
9 favorability (0.006, $p > 0.10$); however, in model 5, relational marketing has a positive and
10
11 significant effect on reputation as being known for quality (0.156, $p < 0.001$). These results remain
12
13 positive and significant when mediators are not included in models 4 and 5 or when traditional
14
15 advertising is not included⁴. Overall, these findings support H1b that relational marketing will
16
17 influence organizational reputation as being known for quality.
18
19

20
21 [Insert Table 5 about here]
22
23
24

25 **Testing H2 and H3: mediating effects of quality of learning and career prospects**

26
27 In models 1, 4 and 5 (Table 5) we can observe the mediating effects of quality of learning and
28
29 career prospects on the relationship between marketing activities and organizational reputation. In
30
31 model 1, traditional advertising has a positive standardized effect on quality of learning (0.066,
32
33 $p < 0.001$); and in models 4 and 5, quality of learning has a positive and significant effect on
34
35 reputation as a generalized favorability (0.074, $p < 0.10$, one-tailed test) and on reputation as being
36
37 known for quality (0.191, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that traditional advertising has an indirect
38
39 effect on both dimensions of organizational reputation through the mediation of quality of learning.
40
41 We tested the significance of this indirect effect following Hayes (2013) and using 10,000 random
42
43 samples. Table 6 summarizes direct and indirect effects of marketing activities on organizational
44
45 reputation. In Table 6, the indirect effect of traditional advertising on reputation as a generalized
46
47 favorability has a bias corrected confidence interval significant at 90% confidence level. Table 6
48
49 also reveals that the indirect effect of traditional advertising on reputation as being known for
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57 ⁴ All additional analyses are available upon request. They are not included here for the sake of brevity.
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1
2
3 quality is also significant at 99% confidence level. These results support H2a that quality of
4
5 learning mediates the relationship between traditional advertising and organizational reputation. In
6
7 other words, traditional advertising has indirect effects on both dimensions of reputation through the
8
9 effect it has on quality of learning.
10

11
12 In model 1, relational marketing has a significant effect on quality of learning (0.104, $p < 0.001$);
13
14 and, as reported earlier, quality of learning has significant effects on reputation as a generalized
15
16 favorability (0.074, $p < 0.10$, one-tailed test) and reputation as being known for quality (0.191,
17
18 $p < 0.001$). In Table 6, the indirect effect of relational marketing on reputation as a generalized
19
20 favorability has a bias corrected confidence interval significant at 89% confidence level, while the
21
22 indirect effect of relational marketing on reputation as being known for quality is significant at 99%
23
24 confidence level. These results support H2b that quality of learning mediates the association
25
26 between relational marketing and both dimensions of organizational reputation.
27
28
29

30
31 In model 2, traditional advertising does not have a significant effect on career prospects (-0.022,
32
33 $p > 0.10$). Career prospects, however, have a significant effect on reputation as being known for
34
35 quality (0.665, $p < 0.001$) and no effect on reputation as a generalized favorability (-0.003, $p > 0.10$).
36
37 In Table 6, we are unable to find significant mediation effects of career prospects between
38
39 traditional advertising and organizational reputation. These results do not support H3a that career
40
41 prospects mediate the relationship between traditional advertising and organizational reputation.
42
43

44
45 Relational marketing, in model 2, has a significant and positive effect on career prospects
46
47 (0.025, $p < 0.001$); and, career prospects, as indicated above, have significant effects only on
48
49 reputation as being known for quality (0.665, $p < 0.001$). Table 6 indicates that the indirect effect of
50
51 relational marketing on reputation as being known for quality through career prospects is significant
52
53 at 99% confidence level. These findings support H3b. In other words, relational marketing has an
54
55 indirect effect on reputation as being known for quality through the effect it has on career prospects.
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Testing H4: mediating effects of extracurricular activities

We can observe the mediating effects of extracurricular activities on the relationship between marketing activities and organizational reputation in models 3, 4 and 5 (Table 6). In model 3, traditional advertising has a significant effect on extracurricular activities (0.153, $p < 0.001$).

However, extracurricular activities do not have any significant effect on reputation as a generalized favorability (-0.029 , $p > 0.10$) nor on reputation as being known for quality (-0.033 , $p > 0.10$). Table 6 also indicates that the mediation of extracurricular activities on reputation is not significant. These findings do not support H4a, that extracurricular activities mediate the relationship between traditional advertising and organizational reputation.

In model 3, relational marketing has a significant effect on extracurricular activities (0.183, $p < 0.001$); however, extracurricular activities do not have significant effects on any of the reputation variables, as reported earlier. Additionally, in Table 6, we are unable to identify significant mediation effects of extracurricular activities. These results do not support H4b that extracurricular activities mediate the association between relational marketing and organizational reputation.

[Insert Table 6 about here]

Testing H5: moderation effects of cultural dimensions

In Table 5, models 6 and 7, we can visualize the moderating effects of cultural dimensions on the relationship between marketing activities and organizational reputation. In models 6 and 7, the interaction between traditional advertising and individualism does not have a significant effect on neither reputation as a generalized favorability nor on reputation as being known for quality. In these models, the interaction between traditional advertising and masculinity does not have a significant effect on neither measure of organizational reputation. These results do not support H5a,

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2
3 that in countries with higher individualism and masculinity, traditional advertising will have a
4
5 higher influence on organizational reputation.
6

7 In models 6 and 7, the interaction between relational marketing and individualism has a
8
9 significant effect on reputation as a generalized favorability (-0.056, $p < 0.10$) and reputation as a
10
11 being known for quality (-0.049, $p < 0.10$). Additionally, the interaction between relational marketing
12
13 and masculinity has a significant impact on reputation as a generalized favorability (-0.069,
14
15 $p < 0.05$). These findings support H5b, that in countries with lower individualism and masculinity,
16
17 relational marketing will have a higher influence on organizational reputation.
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21 Findings in models 6 and 7 show that the interaction between traditional advertising and
22
23 uncertainty avoidance does not have a significant effect on organizational reputation. This result
24
25 does not support H5c that in countries with higher uncertainty avoidance, traditional advertising
26
27 will have a higher influence on organizational reputation.
28
29

30 All our findings from Table 5 are net of the effect of respondents' individual characteristics,
31
32 university level variables, and country level factors. It is important to note that size, individualism,
33
34 masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and education expenditures have effects on quality of learning,
35
36 career prospects, extracurricular activities, reputation as a generalized favorability and reputation as
37
38 being known for quality. Gender has significant effects on career prospects and extracurricular
39
40 activities, while parents' education has an effect on career prospects. The r-square of all models are
41
42 statistically significant.
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49 **Discussion and conclusions**

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51 The current study examined marketing antecedents of organizational reputation in an international,
52
53 cross-country context. In particular, by building on impression management theory, this research
54
55 focused on examining the mediating influence of desired organizational attributes on the
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1
2 relationship between marketing activities and organizational reputation. As follows we discuss
3
4 implications for theory and managers.
5

6 7 **Theoretical implications**

8
9 Our results indicate that relational marketing is an important driver of organizational reputation
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11 across the countries examined in this study. This finding contributes to current international
12
13 marketing research that has established the positive influence of direct marketing, marketing
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15 communications of corporate social responsibility and relationship investment to build reputation
16
17 across countries (Becker-Olsen et al., 2011; Falkenreck & Wagner, 2010; Radomir & Alan, 2018;
18
19 Samiee et al., 2015). Our study highlights, that in the context of HE, relational marketing activities
20
21 not only create an emotional attachment with the potential target market but also should emphasize
22
23 desired organizational attributes such as quality of learning and career prospects in order to build
24
25 reputation. In our study, relational marketing has higher total effects on reputation than what
26
27 traditional advertising has. When studying antecedents of organizational reputation, future studies -
28
29 especially in the context of higher education- are encouraged to include relational marketing as an
30
31 independent variable.
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37 Our findings on the moderation effects of cultural dimensions also contribute to international
38
39 marketing research. Previous research has shown that national culture affects reputation (e.g.,
40
41 Deephouse et al., 2016; Swoboda and colleagues, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020), such that corporate
42
43 reputation perceptions are stronger in countries that score high on power distance and masculinity
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45 and weaker in countries that score high on individualism (Swoboda & Hirschmann, 2017). Our
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47 study goes one step further and indicates that the influence of relational marketing on organizational
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49 reputation varies depending on the cultural characteristics of a country. Specifically, our findings
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51 support that relational marketing has a higher influence on organizational reputation in countries
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53 with lower individualism and masculinity scores. In other words, relational marketing has a higher
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3 impact on organizational reputation in more collectivistic and feminine countries. It appears that in
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5 countries with collectivistic characteristics, interpersonal relationships and communication are
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7 relatively more important (Pergelova & Angulo-Ruiz, 2017) to build organizational reputation.
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9 Additionally, because individuals in countries with feminine values appreciate modesty and
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11 relationship quality, individual are more prone to trust relational marketing activities (Möller &
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13 Eisend, 2010) which in turn build organizational reputation.
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17 Our findings also contribute to international marketing research by showing that traditional
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19 advertising does not have direct effects on organizational reputation across countries. However, in
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21 the context of HE, traditional advertising has indirect effects on reputation through the mediation of
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23 quality of learning. Our results are in line with previous research which has found that advertising
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25 does not strongly affect brand identity and reputation in the context of HE institutions (Foroudi et
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27 al., 2017). However, our results provide a more nuanced understanding of how traditional
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29 advertising works its way to build organizational reputation. Future research should consider the
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31 inclusion of mediators when examining the influence of advertising on reputation – particularly, in
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33 the context of universities.
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37 This study also contributes to research on international marketing of higher education
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39 institutions. While previous studies have indicated that internationalization of universities and
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41 employee engagement affects reputation (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013; Rashid & Mustafa, 2021),
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43 our research finds that quality of learning mediates the relationship between marketing activities
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45 and organizational reputation across countries. Previous literature has strongly indicated that quality
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47 of learning is a critical desired organizational attribute that potential students seek when choosing a
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49 university (Angulo-Ruiz et al., 2016; Baharun et al., 2010; Chapman & Pyvis, 2006; Herrero-
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51 Crespo et al., 2016; Wiese et al., 2010). In particular, our study contributes with the notion that
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53 quality of learning is a critical mechanism through which marketing activities can affect reputation
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3 in the context of HE institutions. Additionally, our results indicate that career prospects mediate the
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5 relationship between relational marketing and organizational reputation. Extant literature, in the
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7 context of HE, has highlighted that career prospects is another critical desired attribute of potential
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9 university students (Angulo-Ruiz et al., 2016; Girasek et al., 2011; Gray et al., 2003; Ivy, 2010;
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11 Lehman, 2009; Mai, 2005; Wiese et al., 2010). In this sense, our study contributes to international
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13 marketing research of higher education institutions by indicating that career prospects are
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15 significant desired impressions that universities can use in their relational marketing activities in
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17 order to build organizational reputation across countries.
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21 Based on theory and literature, we expected that extracurricular activities mediate the
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23 relationship between marketing activities and organizational reputation. Although -in the HE
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25 context- our findings indicate that traditional advertising and relational marketing can signal
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27 extracurricular activities, these signals do not have an impact on organizational reputation. Our
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29 study corroborates the relevance of extracurricular activities as previous studies suggest (Ivy, 2010;
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31 Sojkin et al., 2011; Tinto, 1975). However, we were unable to find empirical support to the notion
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33 of extracurricular activities acting as a desired impression that can help marketing activities affect
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35 organizational reputation. Future research is encouraged to further examine under what
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37 circumstances extracurricular activities can act as mediators that impact organizational reputation.
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42 In our study only five out of eleven hypotheses were supported, and in our opinion, this
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44 indicates the nature of the context studied – HE. As our findings indicate, in this context, relational
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46 marketing appears to be a very important driver of organizational reputation. If we were to build a
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48 framework only hypothesizing on relational marketing, four out of five hypotheses would have been
49
50 supported. However, we decided to contrast between traditional advertising and relational
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52 marketing as these are two important marketing activities in the marketing discipline. We also focus
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54 on these marketing activities because in some contexts studied (e.g., Canada), traditional advertising
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3 has a heavier weight in the marketing budget of universities; while in other contexts studied (e.g.,
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5 Peru) relational marketing is a stronger component of the marketing budget.
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8 Altogether, our study contributes to international marketing research by providing a better
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10 understanding of how reputation is formed in an international context. Current studies have
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12 improved our understanding of the role of culture and other factors on reputation (see Table 1).
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14 Extant literature has also increased our knowledge on the outcomes of reputation (Ali et al. 2015;
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16 Bartikowski et al. 2011; Jin et al. 2008; Newburry, 2010; Sarstedt et al. 2013; Swoboda et al. 2016,
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18 2017; Swoboda & Batton, 2020; Swoboda & Hirschmann 2017). However, our study advances the
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20 conversation on the antecedents of reputation in an international context by providing insights on
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22 how marketing activities impact reputation across countries. Specifically, we have shown that -in
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24 the context of HE across countries- relational marketing plays a significant role for building
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26 reputation, and that desired impressions such as quality of learning and career prospects are key
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28 mechanisms to explain how marketing activities build reputation.
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33 Impression management theory serves as an important base to further understand the dynamics
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35 of how reputation is formed (Goffman, 1959; Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Shukla, 2012). Previous
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37 research has focused on studying the antecedents of actor behavior (Bolino et al., 2016; Carter,
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39 2006; Morrison & Bies, 1991); however, our study provides insights on the consequences of actor
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41 behavior from an audience perspective. Impression management theory also serves as a perspective
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43 to understand how reputation is formed in international markets and what would be the role of
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45 marketing across countries. Current literature on impression management theory has been silent on
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47 how this theory may work in an international context. This study provides some nuances on the net
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49 effect of actor behavior on audience favorability after controlling for several respondents' and
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51 countries' economic and cultural characteristics. We integrate constructs that have been studied
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53 independently into a more cohesive framework that links marketing activities, desired impressions
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2 and organizational reputation across countries. With our study, impression management theory
3 provides a framework to study reputation not only in domestic but also in international markets.
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8 9 **Managerial implications**

10 This research provides decision makers with a framework based on impression management theory
11 which can be applicable in universities. The framework indicates how organizational activities can
12 drive reputation. Specifically, our framework posits that marketing activities need to build desired
13 organizational attributes which in turn will affect reputation as being known for something and
14 reputation as a generalized favorability. Research on organizational reputation has built evidence
15 about which desired organizational attributes impact reputation (e.g., Agarwal et al., 2015; Davies
16 et al., 2010; Money & Hillenbrand, 2006; Ruiz et al., 2016; van der Merwe & Puth, 2014; Walsh et
17 al., 2009; Hallier Willi et al., 2014). In this study, however, we bring research on reputation one
18 step forward and focus on how marketing activities influence organizational reputation through the
19 mediation of desired organizational attributes. In other words, this study's framework can allow
20 universities to be better informed on which actions they need to take to build desired organizational
21 attributes that will affect their reputation.
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39 University administrators should rely on relational marketing as a critical marketing activity that
40 can drive reputation directly and indirectly. For instance, universities can talk to prospects about the
41 university's quality of learning and career prospects during open houses, career expo days,
42 information sessions on campus or in face-to-face interactions with alumni. When talking to
43 potential students about career prospects, universities can refer to desired programs of study,
44 diversified choice of majors or future career opportunities. In universities, traditional advertising
45 seems to drive reputation only indirectly. One way in which administrators can use traditional
46 advertising to build reputation is by embedding desired impressions related to quality of learning in
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2 their marketing communications. Universities can include information on quality of teachers, the
3 learning environment or access to professors / advisors in their radio, billboards, TV or print ads.
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5 Although traditional advertising and relational marketing can build upon extracurricular activities
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7 desired attributes, these do not appear to affect reputation significantly.
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11 **Limitations and future research directions**

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13 While this study provides systematic findings about the relative importance of a variety of variables
14 for HE marketing and reputation management, it also has limitations. First, the use of convenience
15 samples from up to two universities per country means that the findings cannot be generalized.
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17 Future studies could collect data from more universities within a country, from more countries and
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19 in different points of time in order to generalize the results to the HE context.
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25 Second, in this study we rely on student perceptions (who are the target of HE institutions)
26 about different marketing activities; future research can examine the effectiveness of marketing
27 activities using actual marketing expenditures and linking those to the outcomes that universities
28 have. Such a marketing metrics approach can provide invaluable insights to HE administrators.
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35 Third, future research can examine the relevance of other marketing and organizational
36 activities (beyond traditional advertising and relational marketing) and other desired organizational
37 attributes for building reputation. For instance, future studies can disentangle the potential effects of
38 social media in HE reputation as previous studies have shown the value of social media for HE
39 teaching (Stathopoulou et al., 2019). Future research can also center on organizational actions that
40 involve employees, innovation and research and development, accounting and finance, among
41 others. Finally, future studies can investigate the significance of the framework developed in the HE
42 context to other sectors. Understanding whether the *actions-desired impressions-reputation linkages*
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44 work in other service sectors or in manufacturing industries can be a fruitful avenue for future
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Table 1. Extant empirical research on organizational reputation in an international context

Authors by year	Theory	Antecedents		Contingencies		Operationalization of reputation	Outcomes	Sample & international context
		Marketing activities antecedents	Other antecedents	Mediators	Moderators			
Kitchen & Laurence (2003)	Corporate reputation	Customer	Yes	-	-	Several devices	Financial, social	1016 CEOs from 8 countries
Jin et al. (2008)	Cultural framing	-	-	-	-	Reputation	e-trust, e-satisfaction, e-loyalty	182 from the USA and 203 from Korea
Falkenreck & Wagner (2010)	Commitment-trust	Direct marketing media	Perceived fit of the new product range; customer satisfaction; WOM	-	Masculinity, individualism, uncertainty avoidance,	Reputation and reputation transfer	-	B-to-B customers of a company of hospital medical devices in Australia, Finland, Germany, Spain, and Russia
Newburry (2010)	Signaling	-	-	-	Foreign HQ, international scope, industry effects, return on assets, local tenure, familiarity	Reputation Institute	Company supportive behavior	117,195 individual responses from Spain, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela
Bartikowski et al. (2011)	Signaling	-	-	-	Culture (uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation) and relationship age	Walsh and Beatty (2007); Walsh et al. (2009)	Affective and intentional loyalty	Retail and fast food consumers in France (n=360), U.K. (n=315), and U.S. (n=430)
Becker-Olsen et al. (2011)	Global brand positioning	Marketing communications	-	-	-	Leader, reliable, responsible, innovative	-	Mexico (n=480) and U.S. (n=480)
Deephouse & Jaskiewicz (2013)	Social identity	-	Family ownership, family board presence, family's name in the firm's name	-	-	Reputation Institute	-	197 firms across 8 countries
Delgado-Márquez et al. (2013)	Internationalization higher education	-	Internationalization	-	-	Times HE World Reputation Rankings	-	Top 50 universities in the world
Sarstedt et al. (2013)	Formative and reflective measurement and reputation	-	-	-	-	Americas Most Admired Companies index, Reputation Institute, Walsh and Beatty (2007); Walsh et al. (2009), and 2 formative approaches	Satisfaction, loyalty, trust, word-of-mouth, commitment, customer citizenship behaviors	306 students from all fields at a major German university, mobile phone providers
Soleimani et al. (2014)	Powerful stakeholders	-	Stock market return; financial earnings volatility; corporate social performance	-	Strength of shareholder rights; creditor rights; labor rights	Reputation Institute	-	2,302 firm-years, representing 593 companies from 32 countries
Ali et al. (2015)	Meta-analysis	Media visibility	Financial performance, social performance, firm size, firm risk, firm age, long-term institutional ownership	-	Country of study, stakeholder groups, reputation measures	Reputation	Financial performance, loyalty, trust, commitment	Meta-analysis of 101 studies
Vidaver-Cohen & Gomez (2015)	Signaling and institutional	-	Country of origin	-	-	Reputation Institute	-	Latin Americans evaluations of 519 firms based in Latin America, U.S., Northern & Southern Europe

Authors by year	Theory	Antecedents		Contingencies		Operationalization of reputation	Outcomes	Sample & international context
		Marketing activities antecedents	Other antecedents	Mediators	Moderators			
Deepphouse et al. (2016)	Formal and informal institutions	-	Institutional development, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism, masculinity	-	-	Reputation Institute	-	401 corporations from 25 countries
Swoboda et al. (2016)	Signaling, institutional	-	-	-	Culture, demographic, economic, global connectedness, knowledge, political	Walsh and Beatty (2007); Walsh et al. (2009)	Loyalty	13,665 consumers of a German MNC in 40 countries
Ruiz et al. (2016)	Signaling	-	Products/services, employer branding, reliability / financial strength, corporate social responsibility, satisfaction, trust	-	UK and Spain	It has a good reputation, the general public's opinion is that it has a good reputation, its reputation is better than that of its competitors	Loyalty, word-of-mouth	500 bank customers in the UK and 400 in Spain
Swoboda & Hirschmann (2017)	Signaling	-	Hofstede's cultural dimensions	-	-	Walsh and Beatty (2007); Walsh et al. (2009)	Loyalty	26,897 consumers of a German MNC in 37 countries
Swoboda et al. (2017)	Signaling, institutional, RBV	-	-	-	Regulative, normative, cultural, country commitment and experience	Walsh and Beatty (2007); Walsh et al. (2009)	Loyalty and trust	29,987 consumers of a German MNC in 43 countries
Radomir & Alan (2018)	Signaling social exchange	Perceived service quality	-	Perceived relationship investment	-	Sympathy and competence	-	Banks, Romanian (n=510) and UK (n=525) consumers
Swoboda & Batton (2019)	Signaling	-	Hofstede, Schwartz, GLOBE, Inglehart	-	-	Walsh and Beatty (2007); Walsh et al. (2009)	-	25,397 consumers of a German MNC in 25 countries
Ruiz & Garcia (2019)	Signaling	-	Offering, customer care, innovation, workplace, leadership, integrity, reliability/financial strength and corporate social responsibility	-	Uncertainty avoidance; UK / Spain	Walsh and Beatty (2007) Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001)	-	910 bank customers in the UK and Spain
Osakwe et al. (2020)	Signaling, institutional	-	Service offering appeal, customer care	-	Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa	-	Trust, loyalty	986 bank customers in Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa
Gangi et al. (2020)	Corporate social responsibility	-	Environmental engagement, green product innovation	-	-	Reputation Institute	Profitability, risk	101 companies from 18 countries
Swoboda & Batton (2020)	Signaling	-	-	-	National culture, country development	Walsh and Beatty (2007); Walsh et al. (2009)	Loyalty	32,811 consumers of a German MNC in 44 countries
This study	Impression management	Traditional advertising, relational marketing	Control for variables used in previous research	Quality of learning, career prospects, extracurricular activities	National culture: individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance	Reputation as a generalized favorability, reputation as being known for something (Lange et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2005)	-	1,890 first and second-year university student responses from 10 universities in 8 countries

Notes. Measure of Walsh and Beatty (2007) and Walsh et al. (2009) include: customer orientation, good employer, product/service quality, social/environmental responsibility and reliability/financial strength. Measure of the Reputation Institute includes: company X has a good overall reputation, is a company I have a good feeling about, is a company I trust, and is a company that I admire and respect.

Table 2. Universities in the sample

University	Country	Sample size	Year of foundation	# of students	# of business students
University A	Canada	189	1971	19,606	2,000
University B	Czech	149	1990	1,000	287
University C	Czech	206	2001	5,300	700
University D	France	280	1875	27,000	1,300
University E	Hungary	156	1968	15,000	2,500
University F	Peru	198	2008	8,976	1,060
University G	Romania	151	1872	34,000	6,500
University H	Slovakia	300	1940	11,000	1,655
University I	Slovakia	184	1919	30,000	3,400
University J	Sweden	77	2010	33,000	4,500

Table 3. Operationalization of variables

Variable	Operationalization	Measurement	Literature source
Reputation as a generalized favorability	How would you rank the reputation of this university compared to each of the following? Five institutions were provided to students to make comparisons. Scale used was 1: much better to 5: much worse	We first reversed original variables to have 1: much worse to 5: much better. Then we summed scores given to each of the five comparisons. The total score was used (ranging from 5 to 25 points).	Fischer & Reuber (2007); Lange et al. (2011)
Reputation as being known for quality	Two items were used. I chose this university because of ^a : (1) the quality of programs (2) this university reputation/ranking	Used the latent measurement of partial error variance invariance model. Cronbach's alpha=0.704	Bastedo & Bowman (2010); Lange et al. (2011); Rindova et al. (2005)
Quality of learning	Three items were used ^b . Rate how important the following factors were to you in evaluating a university to attend? (1) Quality of teachers (2) Learning environment (3) Access to professors and advisors	Used the latent measurement of partial error variance invariance model. Cronbach's alpha=0.694	Chapman & Pyvis (2006); Meidan (1977); Wiese et al. (2010)
Career prospects	Three items were used ^b . Rate how important the following factors were to you in evaluating a university to attend? (1) Desired program of study (2) Diversified choice of majors (3) Future career prospects	Used the latent measurement of partial error variance invariance model. Cronbach's alpha=0.667	Gray et al. (2003); Mai (2005); Meidan (1977); Wiese et al. (2010)
Extracurricular activities	Three items were used ^b . Rate how important the following factors were to you in evaluating a university to attend? (1) Extracurricular clubs and activities (2) Student social networking events (3) Sports	Used the latent measurement of partial error variance invariance model. Cronbach's alpha=.707	Angulo et al. (2010); Tinto (1975)
Traditional advertising	Four items were used ^b . How important were each of the following communication methods in your decision to attend a university? (1) Radio ads (2) Billboards ads (3) TV ads (4) Print ads	Used the latent measurement of partial error variance invariance model. Cronbach's alpha=.857	Chapleo (2011)
Relational marketing	Four items were used ^b . How important were each of the following communication methods in your decision to attend a university?: (1) Open house (2) Career expo day (3) Information session on campus (4) Face to face interaction with alumni	Used the latent measurement of partial error variance invariance model. Cronbach's alpha=.765	Arnett et al. (2003); Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka (2006)

Table 3. Continues

Variable	Operationalization	Measurement	Literature source
Gender	Gender	0: male; 1: female	Angulo-Ruiz et al. (2016)
Parent's education	What is the highest level of education of father/legal guardian? And what is the highest level of education of mother/legal guardian?	Scale from 1 to 5, 1-high school or less; 2- diploma/certificate; 3- bachelor; 4- master; 5- doctorate. Total sum of both questions was used.	Angulo-Ruiz et al. (2016)
Size	University size in terms of total number of students	Total number of students	Deephouse & Jaskiewicz (2013)
Individualism	Country level of Individualism	Level of Individualism based on Hofstede (https://geert-hofstede.com/)	de Mooij (2015, 2017); Hofstede (2001)
Masculinity	Country level of Masculinity	Level of Masculinity based on Hofstede (https://geert-hofstede.com/)	de Mooij (2015, 2017); Hofstede (2001)
Uncertainty avoidance	Country level of Uncertainty Avoidance	Level of Uncertainty Avoidance based on Hofstede (https://geert-hofstede.com/)	de Mooij (2015, 2017); Hofstede (2001)
Education expenditures	Country's ratio of education expenditures	Percentage of education expenditures over gross domestic product	Swoboda et al. (2016)

Note: ^aFrom 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". ^bFrom 1 "not important" to 5 "very important"

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and correlations (p-values in parentheses)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Reputation as a generalized favorability	1													
2. Reputation as being known for quality	0.113 (0.000)	1												
3. Quality of learning	0.128 (0.000)	0.134 (0.000)	1											
4. Career prospects	-0.139 (0.000)	0.063 (0.009)	-0.106 (0.000)	1										
5. Extracurricular activities	-0.128 (0.000)	0.048 (0.045)	0.24 (0.000)	-0.086 (0.000)	1									
6. Traditional advertising	-0.071 (0.003)	-0.016 (0.500)	0.303 (0.000)	-0.149 (0.000)	0.39 (0.000)	1								
7. Relational marketing	-0.022 (0.35)	0.165 (0.000)	0.417 (0.000)	-0.161 (0.000)	0.392 (0.000)	0.476 (0.000)	1							
8. Gender	-0.054 (0.025)	0.057 (0.017)	0.018 (0.447)	0.111 (0.000)	-0.022 (0.36)	0.051 (0.034)	0.065 (0.007)	1						
9. Parent's education	0.06 (0.012)	-0.021 (0.376)	-0.111 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.974)	-0.053 (0.027)	-0.168 (0.000)	-0.131 (0.000)	-0.046 (0.053)	1					
10. Size	0.171 (0.000)	0.246 (0.000)	0.19 (0.000)	0.309 (0.000)	-0.228 (0.000)	-0.314 (0.000)	-0.148 (0.000)	0.059 (0.013)	0.07 (0.004)	1				
11. Individualism	0.181 (0.000)	0.07 (0.004)	-0.164 (0.000)	0.09 (0.000)	-0.446 (0.000)	-0.325 (0.000)	-0.243 (0.000)	-0.057 (0.017)	0.151 (0.000)	0.226 (0.000)	1			
12. Masculinity	0.019 (0.434)	-0.107 (0.000)	-0.469 (0.000)	-0.529 (0.000)	-0.175 (0.000)	-0.083 (0.001)	-0.196 (0.000)	-0.032 (0.184)	-0.016 (0.492)	-0.156 (0.000)	0.069 (0.004)	1		
13. Uncertainty avoidance	-0.033 (0.17)	0.127 (0.000)	0.508 (0.000)	-0.441 (0.000)	0.426 (0.000)	0.283 (0.000)	0.41 (0.000)	0.006 (0.801)	-0.062 (0.009)	-0.139 (0.000)	-0.319 (0.000)	-0.311 (0.000)	1	
14. Education expenditures	-0.105 (0.000)	0.046 (0.056)	0.413 (0.000)	0.061 (0.011)	0.317 (0.000)	0.435 (0.000)	0.332 (0.000)	-0.019 (0.421)	-0.259 (0.000)	-0.28 (0.000)	-0.139 (0.000)	-0.404 (0.000)	0.433 (0.00)	1
Mean	17.091	3.599	2.736	5.048	2.878	1.188	2.55	.607	4.44	17077	56.326	64.082	68.03	3.18
Standard deviation	4.03	1.103	2.146	5.842	1.606	0.8	1.239	.489	2.242	11062	19.421	26.981	18.15	1.32

Table 5. The mediation effect of desired organizational attributes (standardized coefficients)

Independent Variables	Model 1 Quality of learning	Model 2 Career prospects	Model 3 Extracurricular activities	Model 4 Reputation as a generalized favorability	Model 5 Reputation as being known for quality	Model 6 ^b Reputation as a generalized favorability	Model 7 ^b Reputation as being known for quality
Quality of learning				0.074† ^a	0.191***	0.068† ^a	0.188***
Career prospects				-0.003	0.665***	0.004	0.664***
Extracurricular activities				-0.029	-0.033	-0.028	-0.034
Traditional advertising	0.066***	-0.002	0.153***	0.006	-0.022	-0.004	-0.027
Relational marketing	0.104***	0.025***	0.183***	0.006	0.156***	0.013	0.161***
Gender	0.014	0.014***	-0.063***	-0.019	0.018	-0.019	0.019
Parents' education	-0.025†	-0.005	.055**	0.001	0.009	0.002	0.01
Size	-3.804***	-0.20***	0.937***	-0.215	3.566***	-0.251	3.564***
Individualism	-14.751***	-0.748***	3.294***	-1.142	11.809***	-1.184	11.902***
Traditional advertising X Individualism						-0.048† ^a	-0.013
Relational marketing X Individualism						-0.056†	-0.049†
Masculinity	-28.045***	-1.38***	6.389***	-2.601	22.145***	-2.709	22.231***
Traditional advertising X Masculinity						0.026	-0.027
Relational marketing X Masculinity						-0.069*	-0.018
Uncertainty avoidance	-19.009***	-0.954***	4.662***	-1.941	15.367***	-2.028	15.445***
Traditional advertising X Uncertainty avoidance						0.001	-0.021
Relational marketing X Uncertainty avoidance						-0.018	0.016
Education expenditures	-22.536***	-1.102***	5.04***	-2.116	18.345***	-2.214	18.405***
University dummies	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
N	1817	1817	1817	1749	1817	1749	1817
RMSE	1.0631	0.8808	1.218	3.734	0.998	3.726	0.997
R ²	0.756***	0.977***	0.424***	0.149***	0.188***	0.156***	0.193***
F-test	489.90	6405.49	117.19	20.98	27.38	16.49	21.29

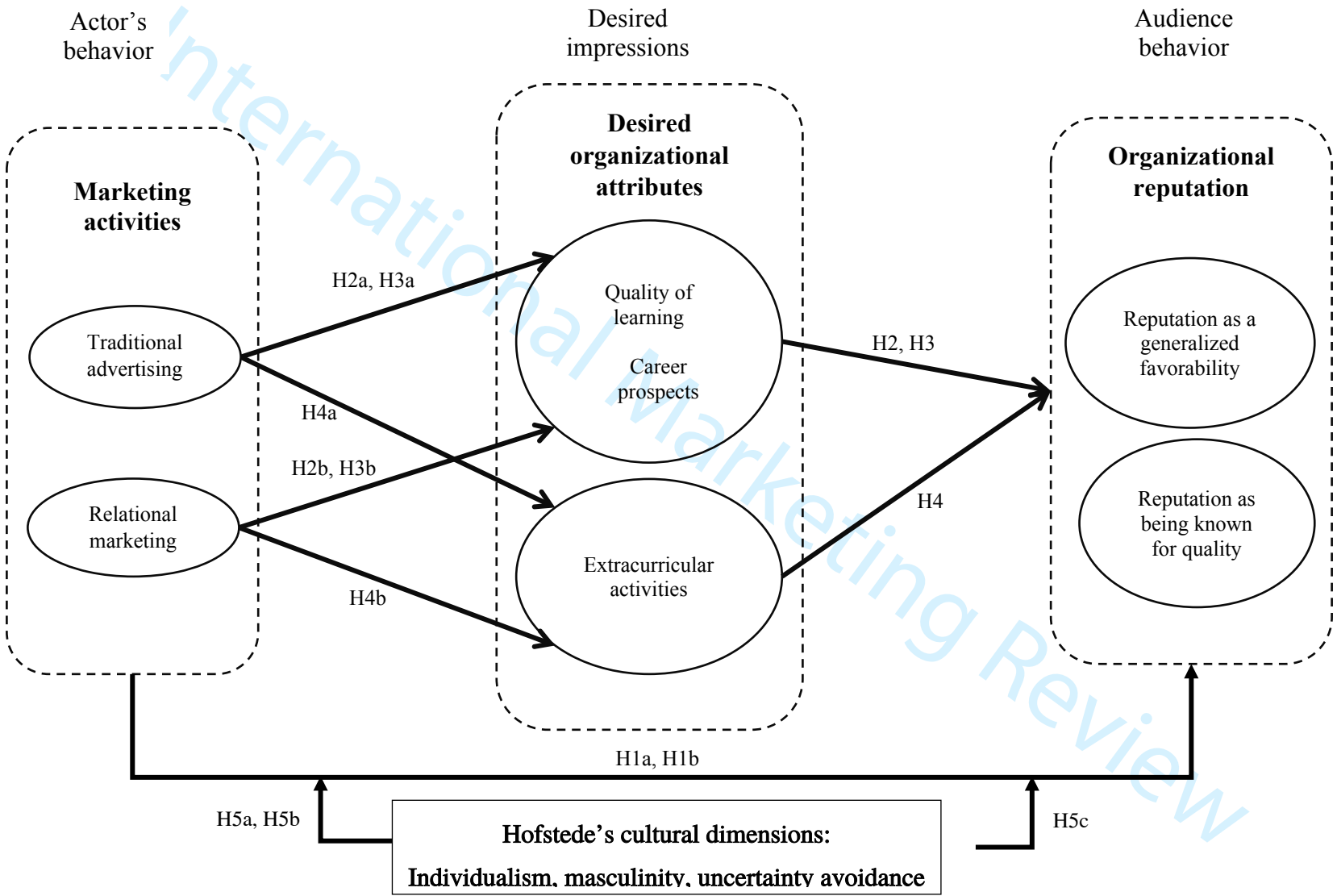
*** p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; †p<.10. ^a One-tail test. Ordinary least squares with robust standard errors is used. Beta coefficients are reported. RMSE is the acronym for root mean square error. ^b In models 6 and 7, we mean centered moderating variables and then computed interactions.

Table 6. Significant direct and bias corrected indirect effects

		Reputation as a generalized favorability (Model 4)	Reputation as being known for quality (Model 5)
Traditional Advertising	Direct effect	n.s.	n.s.
	Indirect effects via:		
	Quality of Learning	.0244 (.000488; .059)†	.0173 (.0018; .0034)***
	Career Prospects	n.s.	n.s.
	Extracurricular Activities	n.s.	n.s.
Relational Marketing	Direct effect	n.s.	.1396***
	Indirect effects via:		
	Quality of Learning	.0252 (.00031; .055) ^a	.0178 (.0019; .0413)***
	Career Prospects	n.s.	.0148 (.0044; .0313)***
	Extracurricular Activities	n.s.	n.s.

^ap<.11; †p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001. n.s.: not significant. All indirect effects have been tested following Hayes (2013); bootstrap bias corrected estimations for indirect effects using 10,000 random samples. Bias corrected confidence intervals are between parentheses (lower bound; upper bound). These are unstandardized effects.

Figure 1. Antecedents of organizational reputation based on the impression management process in a HE context



SUPPLEMENTARY FILES

Supplementary File 1: Measurement model: Confirmatory factor analysis

Overall fit

The overall model χ^2 is 616.52 with 137 degrees of freedom, $p < 0.001$. The root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.045, the comparative fit index (CFI) is 0.957, and the Tucker Lewis index (TLI) is 0.946. CFI and TLI exceed the suggested cutoff value of 0.90 (Hair et al., 2010). The normed χ^2 is 4.5 higher than expected; however, according to Hair et al. (2010) this is expected in circumstances with larger samples (>750) or a high degree of model complexity.

Convergent validity

As it can be observed in Table S1, the factor loading estimates of our measurement model for each construct are all higher than 0.50 threshold (from 0.508 to 0.855). AVE estimates range from 40.3% to 62.2%. We should note that four out of the six AVE estimates are below the recommended threshold of 0.50. We decided to retain items with lower loadings to ensure content validity. Construct reliabilities exceed 0.6, suggesting adequate reliability. The evidence supports the convergent validity of the measurement model.

Discriminant validity

All AVE estimates of the constructs are greater than the corresponding interconstruct-squared correlation estimates, as shown in Table S2, except for quality of learning and career prospects. However, after performing measurement invariance (explained in supplementary file 2), we do not have this problem anymore (check Table 4 in the manuscript). Therefore, this test indicates there are no problems with discriminant validity in the CFA model.

Table S1: Standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted, and reliability of constructs
in CFA

Constructs and Items for CFA	Mean (S.D.)	Factor Loading	AVE	Construct Reliability
Traditional Advertising^a			0.622	0.866
Importance of radio ads	1.84 (1.85)	0.842		
Importance of billboard ads	1.97 (1.19)	0.838		
Importance of television ads	1.81 (1.17)	0.855		
Importance of print ads (e.g. newspaper, magazine)	2.07 (1.27)	0.588		
Relational Marketing^a			0.472	0.777
Importance of open house	2.47 (1.40)	0.663		
Importance of career expo day fair	2.27 (1.29)	0.742		
Importance of information session/presentation on campus	2.51 (1.31)	0.799		
Face-to-face interaction with alumni	2.68 (1.40)	0.508		
Quality of Learning^a			0.436	0.693
Importance of quality of teachers	4.14 (1.05)	0.664		
Importance of the learning environment	3.71 (1.10)	0.705		
Importance of access to professors and advisors	3.37 (1.22)	0.608		
Career Prospects^a			0.403	0.669
Importance of desired program of study	4.13 (1.02)	0.639		
Importance of diversified choice of majors	3.58 (1.20)	0.683		
Importance of future career prospects	4.22 (1.08)	0.579		
Extracurricular Activities^a			0.451	0.710
Importance of extracurricular clubs and activities	2.91 (1.27)	0.757		
Importance of student social networking events	3.05 (1.22)	0.626		
Importance of sports	2.51 (1.30)	0.624		
Reputation Quality^b			0.547	0.705
Level of agreement with "I chose this institution because of the quality of programs/courses"	3.62 (1.05)	0.807		
Level of agreement with "I chose this university because of this university's reputation/ranking"	3.34 (1.09)	0.666		

Note: ^aFrom 1 "not important" to 5 "very important". ^bFrom 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree".

Table S2. Covariance matrix and discriminant validity of constructs in CFA

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Reputation Quality	1.000	0.109	0.095	0.023	0.005	0.088
2. Quality of Learning	0.330	1.000	0.645	0.286	0.084	0.199
3. Career Prospects	0.309	0.803	1.000	0.209	0.045	0.150
4. Extracurricular Activities	0.152	0.535	0.457	1.000	0.177	0.260
5. Traditional Advertising	0.069	0.290	0.212	0.421	1.000	0.345
6. Relational Marketing	0.296	0.446	0.387	0.510	0.587	1.000

Note. Covariances (standardized) are below the diagonal, and squared covariances are above the diagonal.

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3 **Supplementary File 2: Measurement invariance, Comparability of variables across**
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5 **countries**
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8 Since the purpose of this research is to relate advertising and relational marketing to
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10 organizational reputation in a nomological net comparing all 10 universities in 8 countries, this
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12 study assesses cross-national metric invariance, scalar invariance and error variance invariance.
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14 We used a series of structural equation modelling for each construct using the function of Stata
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16 15 (Ender, 2013).
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19 Table S3 offers details of invariance testing that resulted from multi-group analysis on each
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21 of the six constructs using a sequential approach (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998; Byrne,
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23 2004). A baseline model was estimated for each construct and invariance models were compared
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25 against it using chi-square tests (Byrne, 2004). Because we are studying 10 different groups (10
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27 universities), we relaxed group loadings, intercepts and errors. Constructs show at least partial
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29 metric, scalar and error invariance.
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Table S3. Measurement invariance of constructs in CFA

Construct	Models	χ^2	Degrees of Freedom	p-value ^a
Traditional Advertising	Baseline Model	518.72	30	-
	Metric Invariance	657.51	57	0.000
	Partial Metric Invariance	536.06	46	0.363
	Scalar Invariance	1067.68	84	0.000
	Partial Scalar Invariance	555.02	54	0.0513
	Error Invariance	1500.71	111	0.000
	Partial Error Invariance	555.02	54	0.0513
Relational Marketing	Baseline Model	304.78	30	-
	Metric Invariance	366.52	57	0.000
	Partial Metric Invariance	327.58	50	0.2988
	Scalar Invariance	935.32	84	0.000
	Partial Scalar Invariance	331.53	53	0.2667
	Error Invariance	1129.60	111	0.000
	Partial Error Invariance	264.77	48	1.000
Quality of Learning	Baseline Model	179.25	10	-
	Metric Invariance	260.22	28	0.000
	Partial Metric Invariance	192.28	22	0.3665
	Scalar Invariance	710.38	46	0.000
	Partial Scalar Invariance	197.27	27	0.3873
	Error Invariance	894.19	64	0.000
	Partial Error Invariance	196.07	25	0.3294
Career Prospects	Baseline Model	239.72	10	-
	Metric Invariance	311.92	28	0.000
	Partial Metric Invariance	240.99	11	0.2599
	Scalar Invariance	633.28	46	0.000
	Partial Scalar Invariance	247.41	15	0.1742
	Error Invariance	720.43	64	0.000
	Partial Error Invariance	265.92	29	0.1247
Extracurricular Activities	Baseline Model	312.85	10	-
	Metric Invariance	373.57	28	0.000
	Partial Metric Invariance	329.62	19	0.0524
	Scalar Invariance	622.88	46	0.000
	Partial Scalar Invariance	339.63	28	0.0832
	Error Invariance	653.36	64	0.000
	Partial Error Invariance	350.37	43	0.2693
Reputation as being known for Quality	Baseline Model	.00	0	-
	Metric Invariance	30.81	9	0.000
	Partial Metric Invariance	7.49	3	0.0578
	Scalar Invariance	146.25	18	0.000
	Partial Scalar Invariance	9.84	5	0.08
	Error Invariance	193.98	27	0.000
	Partial Error Invariance	9.92	6	0.1282

^a Invariance models are compared with baseline model.